

Enclosure of letter from Martha Kincaide McKay to Alexander Graham Bell, March 20, 1916

TELEPHONE SALUTATIONS.

To the Editor of the Herald:

Which do you prefer over the telephone the hearty, jolly "Hello!" or the key, level-toned "yes"? One is loaded with all sorts of possibilities of something pleasant to come, and the other starts your spirits on the downgrade as soon as your ear catches the frigid monosyllable. Hello has always been a greeting which carried cheer with it. It is usually the greeting of one who has something to give in the way of companionship. It is a caste-leveller. Children who are no respecters of persons, use it freely and with abandon. It is a common greeting among sporting people and people in the ordinary walks of the life. Who introduced the telephone "yes"? It would be hard to believe that it was a busy man. He is content if the message gives him the information which he is after. It must have been some person who refused to remain one of the common every-day users of the telephone; someone who wanted to impress upon the listener that he was holding communion with an unusual personage; one who went in for dignity and the recognition which was due a person of his type. The "yes" comes as a warning not to become too familiar: to have a care; to think before one speaks; to realize that here is a person who refuses to be classed with the "hello" class. And what do you get from the "yes" response? This, that there are in this world some people who carry their dignity a little beyond the limit and want to impress their individuality where it is really needless.

The telephone is a great leveller. You can say things over the telephone that you could not master up your courage to say if you stood face to face with the receiver. The telephone acts as a bluffer and a buffer. Its purpose is to get and give information; it is no longer a luxury, but rather a necessity; and so why not use the ordinary greeting, and not the dead-

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fish-tail response when answering. The hearty hello may give cheer and fleeting instant of joy to whoever catches its cadence; it may deter people from mental depression and save them from sin, but the watch-your-step "yes" will never save a man from drink or profanity.

MRS. J. D. MACKAY.

Quincy, Feb. 17.

WOULD NOT VOTE FOR ROOSEVELT.

To the Editor of the Herald:

I have read with interest the letter